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Galat. iv. Part of the 18th Verse,

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.

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Ordinary to His Majesty, Know Lord Bishop of
Rochester.

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GALAT. iv, part of the 18th Verse.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.

IN this Chapter, St. Paul expostulates with the *Galatians* that they were so much degenerated from the true Spirit of Christian Liberty, as to seem desirous of the Jewish Yoke; from which the Precious Blood of Christ had set the *Jews* free, certainly therefore the *Gentiles*; the Apostle himself by his Doctrine, having fully taught them the extent, and use of that Freedom.

Of which dangerous Error, he discovers the cause in the 17th verse. Is it not, says he. that ther are crept in among you deceitful Teachers? *Men*, who pretend to be as zealous for you, as we the true Ministers of Christ, can be? yet you ought to judge of them, not by the heat of their Zele, but by its effects. *They Zealously*, says he, *affect you, but not well, For they would exclude you, or us*, as some Copies have it: You from the true Faith: Us, from being true Apostles, But Schism, and Separation, mens unjust Excluding them, selves, or others out of the Church, are always works of a false Zele, never signs of a true. Wherefore, says he, beware of them: their Zele is the moe to be suspected, for being so voilent: For though *it be good to be Zealously affected always*, yet it should be only *in a good thing*.

My Text, you see, consists of Two Parts,

First, a just Commendation of true, Religious Zele: and that, in the utmost extent of it; *It is good to be Zealously, Zealously affected always*.

Secondly, the due Limitation of such Zele, so as it may deserve that Commendation: It should be *in a good thing*.

The substance of both is, That true Zele is a most excellent Grace: but that the truth of it is to be esteem'd, not so much by the Height of the Passions, of which it is composed? as by the Goodness of the thing, for which it is employed.

In



In treating of this Doctrine, it will be needful for us to examine, First, what is the Name, and Nature, and Causes of true Zele? That so we may prove it to be *a good thing, to be Zealously affected.*

Secondly, what are the Bounds, and Extremes, what the Corruptions, and Remedies of Zele? that so we may reduce, and confine it to its proper Work, which is, *to be Zealous in a good thing.*

Of these Two particulars, if now, by the Grace of God, we shall make a right Use, and Improvement; the one will excite in us the most sincere, most ardent Affections towards God, and the things of God; the other will direct us in the right managing, and applying of those Affections: which two are indeed the great Design of all true Religion. This is the Sum of all the Laws of Christ, and his Apostles; That as we should most carefully endeavor to know all our Duties towards God, and Man; so we should perform them all, with that unfeigned Integrity, which belongs to Christian Piety; with that temper, and sobriety, which becomes Christian Prudence, and Charity; with that Warmth, and Affection, which agrees with Christian Zele: that is, in other words, We should be *Zealously affected always, but only in good things.*

The word Zele, amongst Ancient Heathen Writers, is us'd indifferently in a good, or a bad sense; but seldom, or never in a Religious sense. At best it is taken by them to express a mans earnest Desire and eager Pursuit of some Temporal Good, and a Grief that others possess that Good, which he wants; especially those who are his equals in other things. Very frequently with them it signifies Emulation, and that sort of it which is commonly accompanied with Envy, and immoderate Contention. And indeed it were much to be wish'd, that in the Christian Church, which has advanc'd the word Zele, and apply'd it to a Divine meaning, there had not bin, in all Ages, too many Christians, who have bin zealous rather according to the Heathen signification of the word than the Christian.

In the Scripture, and amongst Christian Writers, when it is used in the best sense, for what it should be, not what it

too generally is, it then passes for a vehement Affection, a restless Heart, a powerfull Inclination of the Mind, towards Heaven, and Heavenly things; chiefly regarding the Divine Author of them, and his Glory; and next himself, his Truths, his Waies, his Rewards: when with earnest, but harmless Passions, we wish, we contrive, we contend for the Honor of God, the Belief, the Spreading of his Doctrines, the Practice of his Laws, the Flourishing of his Religion, the Injoying of his Promises, the Peace, and Prosperity of his Church: and when most constantly, most irreconcilably we hate, and oppose the things, that are contrary to any of these.

So that true Zele seems not to be any one single Affection of the Soul; as are the other Passions, of Love, Desire, Hope, Joy, Greif, Hatred, and the like; but rather it is a strong Mixture of many holy, and spiritual Affections: rather a gracious Constitution of the whole Mind, than any one particular Grace: affecting the whole Will, swaying all the Thoughts of a devout Heart, and filling it with all manner of pious Intentions; all not only uncounterfeit, but most fervent. It is an Addition of a double Measure, and Force, and Activity to that Religion, which was before Sincere. It is to a spiritual Life, as Health is to a natural: renders that, which less would only breath, and move, not only living, but most lively, and most vigorous. And as in Moral Virtue, there is some more perfect Degree; that the Heathen Moralists call'd Heroic, and even Divine Virtue; which is not it self a distinct Virtue, but the highest pitch, and eminence of all other Virtues; and which, they therefore thought, did make men most neerly to approach the Nature of God: So true Zele may be styled the Heroic, and most Divine Degree of all true Piety.

Such is the Name; Such, I humbly conceive, is, and ought to be, the Nature of true Zele: and by this we may guess at the Usefulness of it. The Usefulness do I say? Why not rather the Necessity? In all Christians some kind of Zele for the Interest, and Practice of the true Religion, is not only most beneficial, but most necessary, most inseparable from its Reality.

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This will appear to be certain, if we reflect on the Causes, that are able, and are wont to raise Zele in mens Hearts. Zele being the top, and perfection of so many Religious Affections for some things, against others: the Causes therefore of it must needs be most eminent, most efficacious in both kinds. These are Good or Evil, both in the highest Degree, both in a double Respect: either the great, and admirable Goodness of a thing in it self; or its extraordinary Goodness, and Agreeableness to us: and either the exceeding Evil of a thing in its own Nature, or its Hurtfulness, and Mischievousness to us.

So lovely, so graceful is all Goodness in it self, that it can scarce be observed by any man, in its native Beauty, without some Emotion in his mind to love, and obtain it. Some secret Charms it has, that are wont to prevail, not only always on its Friends, but often on its very Enemies. There is no question, but many wicked Men are often touch'd with some inward Reverence for that Goodness, which they cannot be persuaded to practise, nay which they outwardly seem to despise.

Such is the attractive Force of it, in its general contemplation. But more, when a thing that is infinitely good in it Self, infinitely better in Nature, greater in Power than we are, shall freely descend down to us, shall condescend to have the nearest relation to us, shall appear to employ all its high Perfections chiefly for our Happiness, nay shall, for that end only, take on it self our Imperfections: what Goodness can be more Aimable in general? what more Obliging, more Tender in particular than this; what ought to produce in us more inflam'd Affections, and Zele for it?

The like may be said on the other side. Whatever is Evil, and Wicked in it self, it is Imperfect, Uncomely, Detestable, even in the Judgement of Nature, of Reason, of Sense it self: and therefore it cannot but raise, in the unprejudic'd Beholders, a general Aversion from it. But more, if the same thing shall appear to be peculiarly Evil, or Injurious, or Pernicious to us: that general Aversion will be, and ought to be turn'd into a particular Hatred, and Zele against it.

And now is there not an entire Conturrence of this double Goodness in the waies of Religion? Of this Double Evil in all things, that are at Enmity with it? Is not Religion so perfectly good in it self, its Doctrines, its Commands, its Recompences; above all, in its Author; that, without the grossest Sensuality, we cannot but admire it? Will it not be so good, and beneficial to us, if we beleive, and practice it, that, without the most heinous Ingratitude, we cannot but be most zealously affected towards it?

On the contrary, is not Sin, notwithstanding all the most flattering Colours, and most alluring Shapes, it can put on, when it strives to beguile our weak Senses; notwithstanding all the most specious Disguises, which the Devil, the Father of all Hypocrisy, can bestow upon it; yet is not Sin in its own Nature, most Deficient, most Vile, most Deformed? Is it not most Pernicious, to our Nature? most Injurious to our true Interest? most Destructive of our Happiness? Are not the most wicked Men compell'd to confess all this; sometimes in their Prosperity; often in their Adversity? sometimes with their Tongues, often in their Fears, well nigh always in their Consciences? All this is so prespicuous, so undeniable, that, in a Congregation of Christians, I need not be over-industrious in the proof of it.

These then being the perpetual Causes of Zele; the greatest Good, or the greatest Evil; either absolutely so in themselves, or relatively so to us; and both Kinds of the Good unquestionably meeting in Religion; both Kinds of the Evil in its Opposites: it is therefore good *to be Zealously affected* for the one, against the other: *to be always Zealously affected*: For the same motives of Zele continuing in the things themselves unchangeable, as they do, and will for ever; for ever all Goodness will be most Charming, for ever all Wickedness will be most Odious; the affections therefore, the flaming Love which the one, the vehement Hatred which the other, that is, the Zele, which they both should stir up in our Minds, ought also to be for ever unchangeable.

Thus far we walk on firm, and even ground: Thus *it is good to be always zealously affected*. But now begins to appear the

the Difficulty, and the Danger. For Zele being compos'd, as you have heard, of the highest Degrees of so many Affections, the true Zele consisting of the greatest lawful Degrees, the false of the greatest unlawful Degrees of those Affections: the right tempering and moderating of all such Affections, and all their Degrees, in themselves so strong, in their Objects so different, must needs be a very hard, and a very hazardous Work. So it is in any one of all our natural Passions. Passion is the great Mover, and Spring of the Soul: When mens Passions are strongest, they may have great, and noble Effects: but they are then also most apt to fall into the greatest Miscarriages. And are not our most spiritual Affections as liable to the like Corruptions? they are in truth, more liable: so much the more, in that mens spiritual Failings are harder to be repented of, or acknowledg'd for Sins, than their natural Faults, or carnal Vices are.

Most certainly the strictest Possession of Piety, the severest Appearance Devotion, the most extraordinary fervour of Zele is most praise-worthy, most Christian, if undissembled, if humbly practis'd: But it is not always most free from Dissimulation, or Spiritual Pride. And if the greatest outward Shew of Zele for Religion be put on by Hypocrisy; If the greatest inward heat of it be not sweetned by Meekness, or not tempered with Humility, or not govern'd by Prudence: can it do God any Service? rather it dishonors Him: can it bring to our own Souls any Benefit? rather it mischeifs them.

Wherefore it is Prudence, Humility, Gentleness, things that, at first sight, seem most inconsistent with all Zele, that are the great Security, the best Guards, the cheif Ornaments of all the most Godly Zele. It is Mediocrity, Decence, Integrity, Charity, that are the great Rules, the Standards of Goodness, of Excellence, nor only in all Human Conversation, not only in all Moral Virtue, but even in all our most Religious Duties.

Are not all, or most Evangelical Virtues, and Graces in danger of Extremes? As there is, God knows, too often a Defect on the one side: so there may be an Excess on the other. May not Hope in God, or Godly Sorrow be perverted into

Presumption, or Despair? May not Faith in God be depraved by Infidelity, or by Superstition? Men may beleive too litle; they may beleive too much. May not the Worship of God be corrupted by Prophaness, or by Idolatry? It may be too naked for want of Ceremonies; it may be too pompous by an Excess of them. Thus the rest: Thus Religious Zele is subject to an Excess, and to a Defect: either when something is mingled with it, which it should not have; or when it Wants something that ought to go along with it. The Defect of it is Lukewarmness, or Coldness in Religion: the Excess is inordinate Heat, and Spiritual Fury. It is very natural for Men, very easy for Christians to offend in one of these: most natural for all sensual Men to fall into the Defect; very easy for many well-meaning Christian to run themselves, for ill-meaning Hypocrites to thrust others into the Excess of it. And it is the chief Employment, the best Fruit of that *Wisdom, which teacheth Men to be wise to Salvation* to find out, and to follow the sober, temperate, middle Way between them both.

Be pleas'd then, to this purpose, that we proceed to the Second Head of my Discourse; to examine, what are the due Degrees, and undue Extremes? what the just Limits? and all Excursions of Zele? and that we first begin with the Excess of it.

This indeed is a Subject, of which it is hard to speak without Satyrical Sharpness, and particular Reflections on many Persons, and Societies, and even Churches of Christians: so ill have been the Designs, so lamentable the Effects of intemperate Zele in all Christendome, especially in our own Time, and Country. Yet let us try to consider this tender Argument, so, as not our Selves to fall into an Extravagance of Zele, whilst we condemn such Excesses. So the Meekness of Christianity reaches all Christian, to deal with erroneously-zealous Christians; to pity, not revile, the Persons, whilst we reprove their Errors; to convince their contentions, and outrageous Zele, by the most Religious, and in truth, the most Powerful Confutation of a milder Practise, and more charitable Examples.

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The great Sign then, and Character in my Text, to distinguish the true Zele from the false, is Goodness: either the Goodness of the Zele it self; or the Goodness of the things about which it is concern'd: the latter being here made a Proof of the former But besides, the Goodness of the Zele it self may be discern'd; either by the Light, which directs it in the Head; or by the Work of it in the Heart. And so we may safely conclude, that to be the only true Zele.

First, That which is guided by a good Light in the Head.

Secondly, That, which consists of good and innocent Affections in the Heart.

Thirdly, That which employs the Head, and the Heart about good things, and those only.

First, we are to inquire, what is the best Guid, and Conductor of Zele in the Head? For that we may consult our Apostle in his Epistle to the *Romans*; Brethren, says he, *My Hearts desire, and Prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved: For I bear them Record that they have a Zele for God, but not according to Knowledge.* Rom. 10. 1. 2.

In which words two things are observable: The Apostles Behavior towards his Brethren in the Flesh, the Israelites, who were mistaken in their Zele For God: and his Discovery of the ground of that Mistake. His Behaviour is not to censure bitterly the Errors of their Zele; but rather to bear witness to the good Intentions of that Zele, which they had; and to pray heartily to God, that he would direct their ill apply'd Affections, by a true, heavenly, and spiritual Light.

Such was his mild and gentle Behaviour, though zealous too, for the Cause of Christ, towards the misguided *Israelites*. His Discovery of the Error of their Zele, and his Reproof of it follows. It is, that it was *not according to Knowledge*.

And as his Behaviour ought to be an Example for our Practice in the like Cases; so his Reproof may afford us the first most certain Rule to instruct our Judgments, in the correcting of the Erroneous, and directing of the true Zele.

Behold, I beseech you. That, in Saint Paul's Opinion is Imperfect, or false Zele, which is only Hot, and Eager without Knowledge: that is the right Zele, which is not only sincere, and in earnest, but *according to Knowledge*? Ac-

According to Knowledge : another manner of Companion of Zele, than what too commonly goes along with it. Are not those Men too often found to be the greatest, and do they not think themselves to be the truest Zelots, who are most notoriously Ignorant ? who make it their Business, their Pride to express their blind Zele, not only without all Knowledge, but oftentimes against all ? whereas true Zele should always begin with true Knowledge first ; and thence proceed to an unwearied Passion, for what it once knows to be worthy of such Passion : False Zele always begins with Passion first, and there usually ends ; seldom, or never goes farther, than ignorant, and violent Passion.

Our Zele then should be *according to Knowledge*. And what Kind of Knowledge ? without all question, First according to the true, saving, Evangelical Knowledge.

It should be according to the Gospel ; the whole Gospel : not only according to its Truths, but Precepts : not only according to its free Grace, but necessary Duties : not only according to its Mysteries, but also its Commandments. It should be according to the Original Design, Fundamental Principles, and Eternal End of the Gospel : not so, as to set any one Doctrine, or Work of it at variance with others ; which are all admirably consistent amongst themselves, and agree in a Blessed Harmony : not so, as only to contend for some temporary Opinions, or factious false Inferences from the Gospel ; which rather serve to uphold the Credit, and secular Interest of Religious Sects, than for the Honour of Religion it self.

Thus should our Zele be according to the Gospel, That Knowledge, which descends from above. But then besides, it will do well, if it be also accompanied with some good, and grave Degree of Civil Wisdom, and Understanding, of sober Knowledge even of this World, and worldly things. For though all that profess the Name of Christ, are chiefly in his Religion to be directed by a true spiritual Light : yet such earnest, and strong Motions of the Mind, as commonly attend Religious Zele, will receive no manner of Hindrance, but rather

ther great Assistance from the subordinate Help, and faithful Service, and steady Guidance of true natural Light it self.

True Zele neither is, nor ought to be a solitary, melancholy Grace: as if it were only fit to dwell in mean, dark and narrow Minds: such as are utterly unprovided of all other natural, or moral, or spiritual Abilities. No. As there is scarce any one Grace or Gift of God, that ever uses to go alone: But where any one of them enters, others will go with it, or soon follow after it: So especially of all Graces, Zele ought never to go alone. In what ever Soul Zele gets the entire Possession, and keeps it singly, without the Society of many other Gifts, or to the shutting out of any one Virtue; there it is a dangerous Guest, there it is an incendiary. But wherever it is leagued, and joyned in company with many other spiritual Endowments, and advantages of nature; with a discreet Judgment, a cleer Understanding, a well-order'd Devotion, an exemplary Charity; there it is the surest Defence, the greatest Beauty of true Piety; there it gives the brightest Lustre to Religion.

This will appear still more evident in my second Particular; that recommends to us a special care of rectifying Zele in the Heart: the Heart, which is the proper Seat of this, as of all other practical Virtues, and Graces: *from the heart proceeds the issue of life*; Prov. 4. 23. of a pious, as well as of a corporeal Life: by the Motions and Pulses of the Heart, the Temper of our spiritual, as well as a bodily State may be judg'd.

In the Heart Zele ought to be composed of the highest Degrees of all pious Affections: of which some in their own Nature are milder, and gentler; some sharper, and more vehement. It should be made up I say, of the largest Measures of spiritual Love, Desire, Hope, Hatred, Grief, Indignation, and the like: some of these Affections earnestly fixing our Minds on God and Religion; the others forcibly averting from us those things, which are displeasing to God, and contrary to Religion.

Now then, that Zele, which has the greater mixture of the more gentle, more benign, more charitable Affections, is most likely to be the best: that wherein the other more
harsh,

harsh, fowre, and angry passions have the greater Share, and are predominant, that is in most danger to be immoderate, and excessive: that, in which this latter kind does exclude the former, that is undoubtedly unlawful, and wicked.

This seems to be most agreeable to the great primitive purpose of true Christianity; and it may perhaps be more clearly exemplified in an Instance. Our love of God, his Truths, his honour; our unquenchable desires to promote, our well-grounded hopes to enjoy his Glory; these Affections should certainly take the first, and the chief place in our Zele: these can never be too much in earnest: they can never carry out our hearts beyond due measure. Our hatred of those ways which God hates, our Grief for, and Indignation against those things, that displease, and dishonour him; these should have their Turn too in our Minds: these also are very acceptable to God Himself. But then there ought to be a much stricter Guard kept on this sort of passions; that they do not exceed due Bounds; that they do not precipitate us into Voilence, or strife, or Malice; which are condemn'd by St. *James* under the title of *πικρὸς ἔκλε* Jam. 3. 14. that is, bitter Envy in our Translation; and this kind is reckon'd by St. *Paul*, as one of the most carnal Sins: for amongst *the works of the Flesh*, which he says are manifest, he names *Murders, Drunkeness, Witchcrafts, Hatred, Variance, Strife, Emulations, Wrath, Seditions, Heresies*: Gal. 5. 19. 20, 21. Where that word, which we translate *Emulations*, is in the Original *ἐκλε*.

Thus whatever all pretended Zelots may think of the sublime Purity, and Spirituality of all Zele; we find some Zele may be in the Company of the grossest, and most sensual Sins; and, you see, from Saint *Paul* it deserves the name of Emulations, from Saint *James* the name of Envy; of which although *Aristotle* allows that some Emulation may be good, and may be found in some good Men; yet Envy he utterly condemns as wicked in its self, and only to be found in wicked Minds. And such was that Envy, which moved the high Priests, and Sadduces. to raise the

And so in *Clem.*
Ep ad Corinth.
often. *Arist.*
Rhet. lib. 2. c.
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the very first Persecution against the Church. When they beheld themselves so much over-match'd by the glorious Works, and excellent Abilities, and Divine Authority of the Apostles, 'tis said ἐπλήθυνον ζήλῳ and immediately *they laid their hands on them, and cast them into Prison.* Acts 5, 17, 18. They were fill'd with Zele, or as we read it, with Indignation, or Envy; the usual Cause, and Original of all Sects. and Schisms, and Heresies.

But of that only in passing; It is then most true, that in their Love of God, and Desire to please Him, men can never be too affectionate: It is as true, though it may at first seem a Paradox, that in their Hatred of Sin, men may be sometimes too passionate. Our Love of God may and should provoke us to love the things of God, yea and the Persons, that especially bear the Image of God; to love, and reverence them, as much as we can, the more the better. But our Hatred of Sin may carry us insensibly farther than against the Sin; which we should hate altogether; it may involve the Person; which we should not hate at all. For all Hatred of Persons, by very many Christian Principles, we are most solemnly, indispensably forbid. So that the more eager, and sharp Acts of Zele are not permitted to all Men always to practise: but the more Tender, more Christian part of it is alway commanded to all. All are not always bound to hate, and punish the true Enemies of Religion; much less any whom they may fancy to be so: all are always obliged to love its true Friends, and to pray for its very Enemies.

That is a second Sign of the true Evangelical Zele, and Note for the detection of it contrary; its should abound more in the mild, and good-natured Affections, than in the vehemence, and wrathful Passions. An Observation that is the more seasonable to be consider'd, because it is every where very notorious, and indeed a deplorable thing in it self; that the Religion, which was intended to reconcile Mankind to Almighty God, whom we had infinitely offended, should not universally have the like Effect in reconciling Mankind amongst themselves, between whom there can be no such Offences: that in Religion men should be generally much more

more given to that part, which inclines them to Hatred, Anger, and Censure of Evil things, than to that, which prefers Brotherly Love, Candor, Good-will, and Kindness for Good things. Do not too many beleive no Religion to be Pure, but what is intemperately Rigid? No Zele to be Spiritual but what is Cenforious, or Vindicative? whereas no Religion is true, that is not Peaceable, as well as Pure: no Zele is Spiritual, that is not also Charitable, nay cheifly so.

The true Zele should be in Religion, what true Courage is in human Nature. None but Minds truly pious are capable of the one: none but Minds truly great are capable of the other: and they both alike dispose, and qualifie the Hearts, which they inhabit. You well know, that to be the truest Courage, which is not only firm, brave, undaunted, but also calm, inoffensive, slow to Anger, hard to be provoked, or soon reconciled. Give me leave to add, so should the true Zele be; not only constant, daring, fearless; but meek, compassionate, long-suffering, easie to be intreated. All other Courage, besides that, is not true Valour but Brutishness; all other Zele, besides this, is not a Christian Grace, but Religious Madness.

Having thus declared, what is to be the Composition of Zele in the Head, and the Heart; of what Kind of Knowledge, of what Sort of Affections it ought to consist: I come in the last place to declare, what it is the true Object of. For that we need go no farther than to the words of my Text. *It is good to be zealous in a good thing.*

In a Good thing. I cannot but observe First, that it is here only said *a good Thing*. No mention is made of Zele for Good persons. For though a Zele for persons is lawful, nay commendable: as Saint Paul here commends these *Galatians*, that *They would have given him their very Eyes*: Gal. 4. 15. Yet in general a Zele, for persons, is far less Religious, far more easie to be perverted, than a Zele for things. Indeed scarce any thing can be more pernicious to Religion, than when its Interest is made a Business rather of Names than things. May we not impute to this one Mistake, a great part of all the most dangerous Animosities, and Schisms, that have in-
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fested the Christian Church? Have they not most frequently risen from a Factions Admiration of some particular Man, some particular Church, some Head of a party, some Author of a new Opinion?

A Corruption that began very early, even in the Primitive Age. Does not Saint *Paul* reprehend his Contemporaries, for saying, not only I am of Christ; but I am of *Paul*, I am of *Apollos*, I am of *Cephas*? Though he himself was nam'd one of the Parties, yet the rather, the more warmly he condemns their Partiality: the more he undervalues himself, and his excellent Brethren, whose Names were abused in the like manner with his, who, says he, is *Paul*? who *Apollos*? Who? They were some of the greatest and most eminent Ministers of Jesus Christ both in Dignity, and Abilities. And can it then be thought Zele to contend for any other Names, when it was Envy, and Strife to set up for *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*? And was not this Danger most wisely foreseen by the Apostle? For although neither the ill use of *Paul*, or *Apollos* Name did any considerable Hurt, that we know of: Yet the pretence of *Cephas* Name, and abuse of his Authority, has caus'd the greatest Rents, and Divisions, that ever were in the Christian Church: the Separation of the Eastern Church from the Western, and of the Western within it self.

That is one Fatel Error, when Men imprudently, and uncharitably often, seditiously and mutinously sometimes, employ their Zele for Persons. There is another Fault, that is contrary to this, and full as mischeivous, but less taken notice of for a Fault? nay amongst too many it passes for a Sign of a good, and Godly, and publick Spirit. That is, when men unduly exercise their Zele against persons; not only against evil persons; not only against some good persons; but against those, who are the most venerable, and sacred.

I would willingly ask any man, that has but once read the Bible over. whether the whole Tenor of the Divine Law does not positively require Humility, and Meekness to all men; a Love for Neighbours, that is, in the Gospel sense, for all men too; a due Observance of all Degrees of men; a hearty submission to Teachers; a conscientious Subjection to Governors?

nors? whether all these Duties be not often most Divinely repeated, and inculcated throughout the whole Scripture? Whether if a wise, and honest heathen should impartially survey our Religion, he would not presently conclude, that the main Practises of it which concern this World, ought chiefly to consist in this kind of good Offices? But then I would ask any man expienc'd in the World, whether the greatest part of all the pretended Zele, of all sides, in our Memories, has not too much in publick, almost continually in private, spent, and vented it self, either in unchristian Censure of Neighbours, or Detracting from Superiors, or undervaluing of Teachers, or Slandering of Governors? Slandering? 'Twere well if they stopt there. Slander is an innocent thing, in comparison of those dire attempts, in which a Rage of Zele has engaged too many Zelots against their Governors.

But can that be a Gospel Zele, which at least is the worst of ill Manners; in truth is most destructive to all Human Society? A Zele, which is most levelled against those very Persons, of whom the Laws of Nature, and Morality, and Policy, as well as the Gospel, have commanded men to think with the greatest Affection; to speak with the greatest Reverence; to act for them with most dutiful Obedience. nay for whom, if for any, the Gospel has taught them to be most zealous.

On the whole Matter, it is not at all good to be zealous against any persons; as they are Such; but only against their Crimes: It is better to be zealous for Things, than for Persons. But then it should be only for good things. A Rule, that does certainly exclude all manner of Zele for ill things; all vehement Zele for little things. The one can only be the Zele of a wicked Mind: The other only of a light, and vain Mind. Indeed those things, in our selves, are the only proper Objects of our Zele, which, in others, are the unquestionable Subjects of our Praises: Phil. 4. 8. and that neither ill things, nor little things can be: the one meriting our Hatred; the other a low Esteem, if not our Contempt.

Of ill things there is no manner of question. But to determine, what are little things in Religion, great wariness is to be used, Many think nothing to be truly great in it, but what
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concerns Christian Faith: Christian Works they respect not so much: Christian Discipline, or Decence of Worship they regard not at all. But we are to go by another Measure. Undoubtedly those things are absolutely Little in Religion, that, neither in particular, nor in general, conduce to the Advancement of Truth, or Holiness, or Peace, or Order in the Christian Church. Whatever things do really contribute to all these Ends, they are absolutely the greatest things in Religion. Whatever do promote any of one these Ends, though perhaps not equally all even these are, by no means to be accounted little things.

Thus the use of some distinct habit, or Gesture, or Time, or place may seem of no great Concernment in Christian Doctrine: But it is of great Concernment in Christian Devotion, and Discipline. Thus any one particular Decence, in Divine Service, may seem to some no great thing: but Decence in general is a great thing; and that must be exercis'd in some particulars, or other; or it is nothing but an empty Name. Thus any one Ceremony may be esteemed a small thing, before it is Commanded: yet it cannot be so afterwards. For Obedience is a great thing; The Neglect of all Ceremony introduces great Disorder; and for men to withdraw from a true Church, on the dislike of a few Ceremonies only, destroys all possibility of Communion.

Wherefore not only Matters of belief, but of Discipline, of Order, of Communion are all, in their several Ranks, Things of great Moment; they are good Things; and so all of them may be, in their proportion, the proper Objects of an honest Zele. Still I say in their proportion: For as nothing but goodness can make Zele to be profitable, nothing but goodness can make it not to be danerous: so in all things of Religion, there being a Gradual Goodness, there may be also different Degrees of Zele.

The First, and Principal share belongs to the good Truths of necessary Knowledg; or that immediately conduce to practise; then to the indispensable Rules of practise, and Discipline; then to the good things of Order and Decence. The Distinction between all these, and the Reason of it is

manifest. For the Goodness of all Opinions, and Ceremonies is to be examin'd not by themselves, or by their own Light, but only by the Goodness of the Works, which attend their Belief, and performance; whereas all necessary Truths, and good Works are unalterably, eternally good in themselves. Of good Works our Apostle tells us, that it was the great End of our Saviours giving Himself for us, *that he might free us from all Iniquity, and redeem us to Himself a peculiar People; and a zealous People too: zealous of what? not only of some good party, some good Doctrine, some good Article of Faith, but Zealous of good Works, Tit. 2. 14.*

OF good Works there are chiefly two sort that deserve to be the Objects of Zele. Either such as are common to all, Christians, and ought to be perform'd by all, in the general Course of a Christian Life; by the general obligation of our Christian profession: or else such as are not common to all, but proper to some persons, and Calling, and Conditions of men: as are the peculiar Duties of Princes, Magistrates, Judges, Ministers, and the like; according to their several Stations in this World.

Here then will be found the great Difference: This is the great Touchstone of Zele. Certainly all men truly Zealous, will most industriously endeavor to perform the first kind of good Works always; those, I mean, that are incumbent on all Christians. And they will as piously apply themselves to the second Kind of good Works; if any of them come to be their own just Duties; but not else. They will always strive to be good, devout, just, bountiful, merciful Christians: but they will never think it to be a part of Religion, to rush into the Office of Princes, or Magistrates, or Judges, or Ministers, or to undertake any of them; nay they will think it their Duty to forbear them; unless they be their own lawful Offices; lawful by the Laws of God, and Man.

Whereas Irregular Zele is, in nothing, more Irregular than in this. Does it not too commonly hurry private men, beyond their own Business, and Callings, and make them unreasonably, unjuly to invade the Business, and Callings of other men? In studying to be Quiet, and to do their own Business,

finest, in Purifying their own Hearts, in Amending their own Lives, in Subduing their own Lusts, how few Zelots of all Parties employ their Zele? how hot, how Forward, how Restless are they in exclaiming against Publick Sins, in Crying aloud for the Punishment of National Wickedness? how much does some mens Zele converse abroad, and without doors? how little at home, and within? how many does it urge, and inflame rather to do Justice on some Sins, than to forbear all Sin? how many rather to be Correctors, than Practisers of Religion?

Of this kind of Pragmatical Zele, when private men usurp an Authority that belongs not to them; in Shew of punishing Sinners, and Asserting the Cause of the Church, and Vindicating the Glory of God; there was a terrible Instance amongst the Jews: so terrible, that after it, one might well have hoped, there would have bin no more like it. Though it be very commonly known, yet I cannot but mention it; at this time especially; because it did equal, if not exceed, all the Modern Transports of enraged Zele: indeed it seems to have bin the fatal Original of them all.

For on a pretence of Imitating some extraordinary Cases in the Old Testament; when some men were sometimes immediately Commissioned from God, or from *Moses*, to do extraordinary Actions of Zele; there rose amongst the Jews a Sect, that called themselves Zelots: a Sect most Cruel, and Bloody: pretending to be impower'd, by a secret Impulse from above, to be the extraordinary Instruments of Gods Judgements; for the Administration of which, God Himself had then otherwise provided, in an ordinary Course: But under that Disguise, they committed all manner of Riots, and Rapines, and Murders: By their mad Defence of their own Temple, they destroyed it: by their Intestine Confusions, and Divisions, they contrsbuted, almost as much as their Enemies Arms, to the Enslaving of their Country: and it is apparent that next to the Divine Vengeance on that People, for the Death of our Saviour, the Zele of that Sect was one of the principal Causes of the Ruine of their City, and Nation.

From which Dreadful Example, what are we instructed? Certainly that the Zele of private Men has no manner of Al-

lowance from God; to take Patern from extraordinary Cases, to exceed the ordinary Duties of Christianity; or to divert any of them out of their usual Channel; that no Holy Passion, no Illumination, no Inspiration can now be a sufficient Commission to warrant those Attempts, which contradict the common Rules of Peace, Justice, Obedience, and Charity; that nothing can ever authorize such Attempts, but only a Divine, Immediate, Miraculous call from Heaven, and that confirm'd by Miraculous Works too; which, it is a great question, whether there be any such at all in these Ages of the World; or rather, I think, no question, but that there is none such at all; that the Executive Part of Zele belongs only to publick Justice, not to any private men; whatever Shew they may make of a stricter Communion with God, or a more Distinguishing, and Separating way of Holiness: which, the more remarkably Distinguishing, and Separating it is, the more we always ought to suspect that it is Hypocritical: In short, that although God does sometimes make use of Furious Zele, as one of his greatest Scourges on a Sinful People; yet, to our Comfort, at last it always ends in the Destruction of the Zelots themselves. Sometimes whole Nations may perish by the Zele of a few: sometimes the Nation may escape; but the Zelots never.

I intreat your Patience, whilst I mention another Example, recorded in the Scripture, of another manner of Zele perform'd by our Saviour Himself: when, with irresistible Majesty, and Authority, he removed the Exchange, and drove the Mercat out of the Temple. From which excellent Patern, what may we learn? what should any Christian practise like it? what not? By our Saviours doing that Act of Piety, with such eminent Signs of Love for the Beauty, and Purity of Gods Worship; with such Divine Indignation against those that prophaned it; and with an Exaltie so different from the Mildness of his ordinary Behaviour; that his Disciples did upon the very place remember, and apply to Him, that of the *Psalms*, Psal. 69. 9. which was prophcyed of him so long before, *The Zele of thy House has eaten me up*: By this certainly we are taught, that if ever a Christian Zele may be lawfully transported beyond its usual Bounds, it should be for the Purifying of the House of God; first for the Reality, then for the comeliness of Religion; never for Destroying it by Sacriledge, or Defiling it by Rudeness, or Indecence.

But of this Practise of our Saviour, what should every man not follow? Must every Christian, of whatever ordinary Condition, take on him, as Christ himself here did, to vindicate in publick the Glory of God, and his Church, when he thinks his Cause is neglected, or his Worship unreformed? I say not so. Every man is not obliged, no man is, on his own Call, or his own Imagination of a call from God, to have Recourse to open Force, even in the most righteous cause. The doing so makes his part in it to be most unrighteous: The doing so will make him most unlike our Saviours Example, and most disobedient to his Precepts, whom he makes the greatest Shew to imitate, and obey.

How far then may any private Christian goe, to express his Zealous Affection, for the Reformation of Gods Worship? Thus far without question. Whatever Opposition he can make to Sacrilege, and Impiety, by his Wishes, his Studies, his Prayers to God: whatever Disgrace he can put on such Sins, in his own Sphere: whatever Amendment he can make in those, that commit them, by serious Intreaties, or seasonable Reproofs, or just Complaints to both their Superiors; but chiefly, by his own Praise of a more uniform, orderly and devout Piety: All this He may, he should perform: and if this were done, as it ought, it would perhaps be a sufficient Task for the best, the most Zealous private Christians in the World.

But the rest is intrusted from God, and therefore ought to be left by Men, by the best Men, by the greatest Saints, to the Lawful, Publick Authority in Church, and State; In whom the Zele becomes a Sovereign Virtue, which if unduly practised by Private men, were Rashness, or Presumption, or worse. Especially it is a most Christian Grace, when it is seasonably exercised by Christian Princes: Those Powers, that are of God, for the Benefit of men; and over Men, for the Honour of God: one of whose most Sacred Obligations, one of their highest Prerogatives, one of their greatest Praises it is to be the Maintainers, and Cherishers of a Regular Devotion, a Reverend Worship, a true, a decent Piety; which, when ever it loses its Decence, will soon after lose its Reverence, and its Truth. But as long as Religion is protected, by the supreme Power, in its Decence, as well as Truth, so long it will make an abundant Return for the Protection it receives; it will be an invincible Support to the Supreme Power it self.

Thus far we have consider'd one Corruption of Religious Zele, that which transgresses in unbridled Excess: and some of the most effectual Cures, for its Distempers, have been propos'd out of the Word of God; which, you perceive, instead of a blind Zele, only approves a Zele according to the Knowledge; instead of a bitter, teaches us a charitable Zele; instead of a wicked Zele, a Zele for good things; instead of the Jewish Zelors, recommends to us the most Gracious Example of the great Founder of Christianity.

These are some, though I cannot say all, nor the greatest part, of the most common Diseases, and necessary Remedies of Excessive Zele. For that, when it gets loose, and grows intemperate, is wont to violate so many, almost all, not only Spiritual Graces, but even Moral Virtues, and Dictates of Nature; that the Medicines for it, being to be fetch'd from so many, not only Spiritual Graces but even Moral Precepts, and Natural Laws; it is impossible to bring them all within the Compass of a Sermon.

I now could most heartily wish, that I had nothing to say on the other side: that there were not another extreme of Zele still left behind untouched: which offends much in the defect, as the other does in the Excess. But it must be confess'd that Irreligion, Indifference, Carelessness in Religion are as much short of true Zele, as unruly Passion; and furious Contention in Spiritual things, does exceed the true Bounds of a sober Zele.

A Caution, that is most carefully to be regarded by, all Christians, and chiefly by us of this Age. For it is generally found by sad Experience, that both these Extremes of Zele; the Excess, the Defect; are wont either to meet together in the same times, and places, or immediately to succeed one another, and often in the Minds of the very same Men. Alas! too seldom, in Religious Matters, do men strive to correct any one Error of Belief, or Practice, with the moderate Truth, or Practice; too often they oppose it with another Error, as bad, or worse. Does not Looseness of Life, and a want of necessary Sobriety in some men, too frequently drive others into Rigors, that are unnecessary? Does not the fresh, and present Abhorrence of inordinate Zele, and its Effects, too often incline too many, to think the worse of all Religion?

What then remains to be most Seriously wish'd for, and advised? But that we studiously provide against both these Dangers alike? alike against the Fury of Zele, and against the Scandal of Profaneness: but not by the assistance of either of them against the other? that we try to suppress all Licentiousness of Life, and Manners, not by Enthusiasm, not by Superstition, but by a sober, unaffected, reasonable, that is, by a true Christian Piety.

We have felt, and still do fear the sad Influence of a Firy, Fierce Religion, on all sides of us: Here from an Enthusiastical, Private Spirit; there from a pretended Catholick Spirit; but Private too. Yet God forbid that either of these Disgraces of Religion should be alleged as an Excuse, or made an Argument, of carrying any man too far on the contrary, to profess'd Irreligion. We have heard, and known the Name of Holyness abused to the most Destructive Designs: yet God forbid, that the thing it self should be therefore destroy'd, on a Pretence of its own Vindication. We, of all Nations under Heaven, have just Reason to abhor all falsely-inspired Principles of Godlyness: But God forbid we should oppose them with ungodly, Atheistical Practices; which will in truth rather strengthen the other, and give them more Authority. Our Church, and State have bin often well nigh oppress'd by the violent Effects of a Deluding Spirit, and Religious Hypocrisy. And how is that to be prevented for the future? Certainly not by open Impiety: in which there is no Disguise, no Hypocrisy; though perhaps 'twere better, and more modest, if there were. But these, and all other such Spiritual Delusions are best, are only to be reformed by the Genuine Fruits of a sincere Religion, a Conformable Devotion, and the well temper'd Zele of the true Christian Spirit.

Of all the Principles of human Actions, Conscience and Zele are the most Powerful. Even the false Zele is a stronger Principle of Acting, and Suffering, than any other, but the true: unquestionably the true Zele is the strongest of all other, far beyond all Bodily Strength, or Natural Courage, or Exactness of Discipline, or even Honour it self.

Wherefore seeing we are to contend against the Violence of false Zele, and the Obstinacy of seduced Conscience in so many several Shapes: may

we furnish our selves with that Defence, that Assistance, which only is more powerful than those are. With true Conscience may our Affections be most firmly United towards the Government; with true Zele may our Hearts be most ardently inflam'd to our Religion. Let us once be truly zealous towards God, and we shall soon infallibly be United within our selves. For true Zele in Religion is of all things the best means of Union: it is of all things the most irresistible Enemy, the surest Friend.

Too long has this most Heavenly Grace, this Beauty of Holiness, this Bright, this Noon day Glory of all Virtue, this Spirit, this Life of the Life of true Religion; for so all Zele should be, so all true Zele is: too long has this been captivated in our Enemies Tents, of both Parties; too long by them has it been counterfeited, by the Jesuits, by the Schismatics; too long by them have the false Shews, and Images of it been employed, for the most mischievous Ends; for the Confusion of Consciences, of Churches, of Kingdoms; for the Subversion of Religion, of Governments of Government; for ends too horrid, to be here, or any where, particularly mentioned.

At length, let us of this Church; the best Church in the Christian World; and it would be the most flourishing Church too; if all the Members of it had a Zele for it, proportionable to its Goodness; at length let us rouse up our selves to rescue this captivated Zele, to restore it to its own just Liberty; to its own true, truly christian, truly primitive christian Works.

From all such Antichristian Raptures of Zele; which we too often hear of, in these last, and worst Ages of the World; let us withdraw our thoughts, and lift up our Minds to the Imitation of the most christian Examples of it, as of our Saviour himself, so of his Apostles, and Disciples, in the first, and therefore the best Ages.

When God first touched their Hearts with this Coal from the Altar; first kindled this Holy Fire of Zele in their Breasts; what was the Sign of it? not a dark, smothering, hot, offensive, uncomfortable Smoke, but a pure, clear, propitious Flame. What were the Effects of that Flame? how were they Zealous? how within themselves? not only in unmoveable Faith towards God; but in *Shewing their Faith by their Work*. Jam. 2. 18. How were they zealous for the Church of God? *Not concerning Zele, persecuting the Church*; Phil. 3. 6. not in making little Differences between Particular Churches; not in Striving for a groundless Dominion of one Church over all the rest: but for the Welfare, and Happiness of the whole Catholick Church of christ. How were they zealous for the Glory of God? not by violence, or Malice, or Revenge against any; not even against their Oppressors: but only by their own Labours, and Prayers, and Patience, and Magnanimity in Suffering. How were they zealous in Respect to their Temporal Governors? not to resist for Conscience sake, but rather *to be subject*, c. 13. 5. for that very Reason; not by open Rebellion, not by private Machinations; but in Blessing, and Serving, and Submitting to their Emperors, though they were Idolaters; and obeying them, in all things, except their Idolatry.

And

And can any Man possibly doubt, but the same meek, humble, and peaceable Zele is enough for the most perfect Christians of this Age; which was sufficient for the Primitive Christians? whom to imitate is our Duty; but for us to think to excell them were the greatest Presumption. Can it be imagin'd, but the same zeale with which they so earnestly prest the Duty of Obedience to Princes, who were mortal Enemies to the Faith; the same, we ought to shew for the Faith it self: and the true Defenders of it? Can it be reasonably question'd, but the same way which they took to begin the Gospel, and to found the Church of Christ, is still the best way to continue it, where it is begun, and to make it flourish, where it is established?

So therefore are we to temper, so to employ our zeale as they did theirs: to temper it, I can never repeat this too often, to temper it, with Innocence, and Benignity, and Charity; to employ it against Sin, and Disobedience, and Schism; in unfeigned Piety towards God, in Unshaken Duty to his Vice-gerent, in hearty Obedience to his Church.

Most surely these are good things, the best things in this World, and the next. Wherefore it is good for us to be always zealously affected towards them. And if we be so, we need not fear, but God Almighty will still preserve them, and Prosper us in their Preservation: which God of his infinite Mercies grant. *Amen.*



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